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The Scientific Name of the Common Northern Fence Lizard

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In 1938, the name *Sceloporus undulatus undulatus* (Latreille), type locality restricted to Charleston, South Carolina, was regarded as applicable only to a southern subspecies of the fence lizard, necessitating revival of an older name for the widely-distributed northern subspecies (Smith, 1938, p. 7-8). The name chosen for the latter was *Lacerta fasciata* Green (1818, p. 349) type locality restricted to Princeton, New Jersey. The name was then *Sceloporus undulatus fasciatus* (Green).

Actually, in the same article, Green proposed two names: *L. fasciata* and *L. hyacinthina*, both based upon types from the same locality, the former upon a female and the latter upon males. The name *fasciata* was selected (in 1938) for its brevity.

In 1944, prior to the publication of Handbook of Lizards (Smith, 1946), Roger Conant communicated to me the opinion of Dr. Francis Harper that *Lacerta fasciata* Green is not available, and that *L. hyacinthina* Green must be used instead. Upon investigation, this conclusion was substantiated and corrections were made in all places in the Handbook (then in proof)) save on the distributional map, which could not then be corrected.

The facts concerning the suppression of *L. fasciata* Green are simple. Green's name was proposed in 1818, 60 years after Linnaeus had proposed an identical name, (1758, p. 209). As known for many years, the Linnaean name applies to the species of five-lined skink now known as *Eumeces fasciatus* (Linnaeus). Despite the generic transfer of Linnaeus' name, and likewise that of Green, the later name (junior homonym) must be suppressed, according to Article 36 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature: "Rejected homonyms can never be used again." They are ".... still-born and can not be brought to life, even when the species is placed in another genus.... ."

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Since *Lacerta fasciata* Green is nomenclatorially dead, the earliest remaining name available for resurrection in its place is Green's *L. hyacinthina*. Accordingly, so far as now known, the proper name for the northeastern race of the fence lizard is *Sceloporus undulatus hyacinthinus* (Green).

LITERATURE CITED

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